

TYPES OF LICENSED CHILD CARE

FAMILY CHILD CARE

Licensed child care offered in a home other than the child's home for more than 20 hours a month. Family child care providers are licensed by the Office of Child Care (OCC). Family providers can care for up to eight children including two infants under the age of 2 years. Providers establish their own operating days, hours, fees and vacation schedules. Some offer evening, overnight and weekend care which must be approved by OCC.

SCHOOL AGE CARE

Refers to programs for children before and/or after school hours and during school holidays and vacations. Both family child care and center-based settings can offer this kind of care. Programs are also offered in school buildings throughout the county by the Columbia Association and Howard County Recreation and Parks Department.

CHILD CARE CENTERS

Child Care provided in a licensed facility either part-time or full-time. Centers operate on a fixed year-round schedule of ten hours or more per day. Licensed by OCC, some facilities provide care for infants (6 weeks-23 months) which requires one staff member per three infants. Part-time care is typically not offered for infants. Many center programs include school readiness and other educational activities for preschoolers. They can also accommodate school age children before & after school, holidays and summer vacation.

PRIVATE NURSERY SCHOOLS

Offer an "educational" focused program usually 2 ½-3 hours per day with enrollment opportunities of 2, 3 or 5 days a week with morning and/or afternoon sessions available. Nursery Schools generally operate 9 months a year and accept children ages 2 ½ -5 years of age. Nursery programs sponsored by religious organizations comply with state regulations regarding health and safety, but many comply with all regulations.

COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOLS

Cooperative nursery schools are almost identical to regular nursery schools except that parents act as aides in the classroom. Co-op parents are scheduled on a rotating basis helping the teacher with working with children. The Maryland State Department of Education is responsible for approving or certifying private and co-op nursery schools. Nursery programs are typically sponsored by private non-profits or run by Parent Boards.

MONTESSORI SCHOOLS

Prepared environments which allow children to pursue their interests and learn at their own pace based on the Montessori Philosophy. Montessori programs offer specifically designed learning materials that cover academics, home living skills, sensorial exercises and character development. These programs are accredited by the American Montessori Society. For more information visit the American Montessori Society at www.amshq.org.

HEAD START

Programs for children with special needs or who meet income eligibility guidelines. Head Start accepts 3, 4 & 5-year old children and offers developmentally appropriate activities to encourage learning. Head Start's focus is on education, health, (medical, dental & nutrition) and mental health. The programs rely on parent involvement and social services to meet the needs of children and families. Licensed by OCC and/or local boards of education. For more information visit <https://cac-hc.org/programs-services/early-childhood-education-2/> or call 410-313-6440.

REGIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS

Educational programs for 3-5year old children with disabilities and qualify for special education & related services. Individualized programs may include speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy and psychological services. Children without disabilities may apply on a space-available basis. For additional information and registration visit <https://www.hcpss.org/special-education/early-intervention/> or contact the Howard County Public School System Office of Early Intervention at 410-313-7046.

PUBLIC PRE-KINDERGARTEN

These programs are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education and are offered in elementary schools for children who turn 4 years of age by **September 1st** and meet one of the state mandated criteria for enrollment. Pre-Kindergarten is generally offered in half-day sessions and includes instruction in academic, social, emotional and physical development. For additional information visit <https://www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-programs/>, contact your local elementary school or Office of Early Childhood Programs, 410-313-5693.

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten programs are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. MSDE approved programs are for children who turn 5 years of age by **September 1st**. Both public and private kindergartens offer children the year of schooling before first grade and operate full day, nine months of a year. The focus is on teaching essential skills and concepts including instruction in mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, arts, media, music and health/physical education. For more information visit <https://www.hcpss.org/enroll/>

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Refers to child care centers or school-based settings for school age children. Licensed by the Office of Child Care. Activities may include field trips, swimming and arts & crafts.

CAMPS

Day, residential, sleepaway, travel or trip camps offer summer activities for children. Licensed by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Revised 1/7/2021